



June 4, 2013

UN: “Reasonable Grounds to Believe That Chemical Agents Have Been Used [in Syria]”

Today the United Nations Human Rights Council [released](#) its most recent report on the conflict in Syria. Noting that “the conflict in Syria has reached new levels of brutality,” it found “there are reasonable grounds to believe that chemical agents have been used as weapons” in Syria. It further assessed, “war crimes and crimes against humanity have become a daily reality in Syria.” It also found the “transfer of arms” to Syria — as Russia is doing — “heighten the risk of [such] violations, leading to more civilian deaths and injuries.”

In August 2011, President Obama [called](#) on Syrian President Assad “to step aside.” In March 2012, Secretary of State Clinton [said](#) it was only “a matter of time” before the Assad regime fell. So far, the Obama Administration’s response to the Syrian regime’s war crimes, and apparently its plan to bring about the departure of Assad, is to beg Russia to help find a diplomatic solution.

The absurdity of this is self-evident. Just last week, Secretary of State Kerry [said](#), “it is not helpful” to have Russia transferring arms to Syria. Russia’s continued support for Syrian President Assad is one of the main reasons more than 70,000 people have been slaughtered in the current conflict. Russia has vetoed every resolution to come before the United Nations Security Council on the matter and recently voted against a non-binding General Assembly resolution.

In August 2012, President Obama [said](#) chemical weapons “being utilized” would be a “red line.” Secretary Kerry [reaffirmed](#) just last week that “the use of chemical weapons” is “a very serious issue,” and that “the President has made it clear that that is a red line for him.” He went on to say “chemical weaponry is unacceptable if used.” More than a month ago, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel [said](#), “the U.S. intelligence community assesses with some degree of varying confidence that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons on a small scale in Syria.”

Today the United Nations leant its voice to the growing number of assessments that the Assad regime has used chemical weapons against its own people. The Obama Administration has yet to articulate what it plans to do in response to Syria crossing this red line — beyond begging for Russian assistance — as Russia continues to arm the Assad regime.